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**Abstract**

This article analyses how police officers conducting interviews with children reporting their being victim of alleged sexual offenses ask witness if they would like to add to what has been said or whether they have any questions. Interviewing guidelines recommend that this be done during interview closure. The data set comprises twenty-seven videotaped interviews. Data are in British English. Using Conversation Analysis, we show that the understanding of interview closure as an appropriate place in which to request for the initiation of a new topic is paradoxical. We also outline practices for soliciting additional information throughout the course of the interview.

**Introduction**

This paper examines practices through which police officers ask interviewees whether they would like to add to what has been said or whether they have any questions in interviews with children reporting alleged sexual offenses. This is routinely done during the closing phase of interviews using questions such as ‘is there anything else ↓you want to tell me↓’ which we term the additional business question (henceforth ABQ). Both official guidance such as Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance on Using Special Measures (henceforth ABE), published in 2011 by the United Kingdom’s Home Office, and investigative interview training in England and Wales recommend this as one of the tasks that should be undertaken when closing the interview. Other recommended procedures are that the officer should summarise what has been said in the interview (which can lead to further memorial recall, see Walsh & Bull, 2012), as well as explaining what will happen following the interview. Regarding providing opportunity for interviewees to add to what has been said, ABE (2011, p. 85) give a clear instruction.

“The witness should be thanked for their time and effort and asked if there is anything more they wish to communicate. An explanation should be given to the witness of what, if anything, may happen next, but promises that cannot be kept should not be made about future developments. The witness should always be asked if they have any questions and these should be answered as appropriately as possible.”

Similarly, guidelines for interviewing witnesses, victims and suspects from the College of Policing, the professional body for those working in policing in England and Wales, state that during interview closure ‘any questions the interviewee asks should be dealt with’ (2013). To be clear then, guidelines recommend that during the closure of interviews, officers should request for the initiation of a new topic by inviting interviewees to ask questions or to add to what has been said. Let us consider a live example. Immediately prior to the start of extract 1, the interviewer asked the child why he ‘went off the rails’ around the time of the reported incidents. The child replied that this was because of the actions of the alleged perpetrator and we join the participants as the interviewer is acknowledging this information.

Extract 1 003-3

01 **INT** ((gazes at child for duration of turn))

02 pt. .hh (.) alright thank you:, I’ve got no other question:s er

03 Kent at this time is there a:nything else you think I need to know 04 .h (.) at this ti:me

05 **CHI** no:

06 [ (1.2) ]

07 [((gazes at interviewer)) ]

08 **CHI** [°no° ]

09 [((child shakes head))]

10 (1.0)

11 **INT** [°°alright.°° (.) >thank you very much< okay,]

12 [((interviewer nods)) ]

13 .h I’m gonna end the interview then at this time,

The target turn occurs at lines 2-4. In the first TCU the officer initiates a possible pre-closing with ‘alright’ and a display of appreciation, which routinely appear in closing environments (Button, 1987; Antaki, 2002). In the second part of the turn he explicitly formulates the interview as complete with ‘I’ve got no other question:s er Kent at this time’ before delivering the ABQ. The question is grammatically formatted (‘a:nything else’) to prefer a ‘no’ type answer. The child’s declination to proffer a new topic is brief, prompt and type conforming. Following a gap of silence the child repeats this declination, shaking his head as he does so. At line 11 the officer acknowledges this with a sequence closing third (Schegloff, 2007), a display of appreciation, and a move into closing.

The sequence above represents a typical closing in our data. The role of the ABQ within this sequence is as a possible pre-closing. The question is not treated, by the officer or by the interviewer, as a request for the initiation of a new topic. Rather, it is a routine, formulaic step in the pre-closing and closing of the interview.

**Closing Police Interviews**

The closure phase is a crucial part of the investigative interview, a major purpose of which is to minimise any emotional discomfort that interviewees may experience, leaving them “in a positive frame of mind” (ABE, 2011, p. 85). Guidelines recommend that “throughout the interview, and particularly when closing, the interviewer must be prepared to assist the child to cope with the effects upon her/himself of giving an account of what may have been greatly distressing events” (ABE, p. 202, emphasis added). This is particularly significant in cases of alleged child sexual offenses as sexual abuse may produce feelings of shame and guilt and these feelings may be re-elicited during a disclosure (Back, 2012). As Back, Gustafsson, Larsson and Berterö (2011) note in their study of how sexually abused children experience the Swedish legal process, children may experience good contact with the police as helping with their healing. This is significant as it has been suggested that the legal system in Sweden may not be well suited to children’s needs (Diesen & Sutorius, as cited in Back, Gustafsson, Larsson and Berterö).

It is clearly important to elicit a full account as possible as this may result in more investigative leads, increasing the likelihood of corroboration with other evidence and ultimately improving criminal justice responses to sexual offenses (Westera, Kebbell & Milne, 2016). The general consensus is that the closure phase of interviews is an appropriate environment in which to invite the initiation of a new topic in order to gain additional information. For example, as Odeljan, Butorac and Bailey (2015, p. 3) note “the final or closure phase, requires the interviewer to try to ensure that the witness leaves the interview feeling that they have been given the fullest opportunity to be heard”. However we show how the understanding of the close of interviews as an appropriate place in which to request for the initiation of a new topic is paradoxical and fails to take into account participants’ own orientations in the interaction. Such recommendations are based on common-sense ideas, rather than an examination, in close empirical detail, of actual interaction in investigative interviews. Prior to providing such an examination, it is necessary to briefly review the literature on closing interactions and initiating activity shifts.

**Interactional Studies of Activity Shifts and Closing Encounters**

Conversation analytic research has illuminated practices for closing encounters and for initiating activity shifts, where an activity is brought to a close. With regard to closing encounters, Schegloff and Sacks (1973) describe mechanisms for solving ‘the closing problem’, which they describe as “how to organize the simultaneous arrival of the conversationalists at a point where one speaker’s completion will not occasion another speaker’s talk, and that will not be heard as some speaker’s silence” (p. 294-295). A related problem is that of unmentioned mentionables, as each participant may bring a number of mentionables for discussion. The closing problem is one of how to bring an interaction to a close in a way that is recognisable as doing closing, while allowing for thus far unmentioned mentionables to be raised for discussion. Schegloff and Sacks outline a series of steps that make it possible for cointeractants to collaborate in closing an interaction, a) Establishing a closing relevant environment b) Checking for the presence of other ‘mentionables’ via possible pre-closing c) Ending the conversation with a terminal exchange.

Work has examined pre-closing questions in various institutional settings. Stommel and TeMolder (2015) discuss closings in online text based counselling and telephone counselling. They note that as counsellors lack the epistemic right to acknowledge their own advice, it is the clients’ privilege to initiate closings via advice acknowledgement. However web based chat closings frequently lack such an advice acknowledgement. A common ‘solution’ is for counsellors to elicit such an acknowledgement with a pre-closing question such as ‘does that give you something to work with?’ Clients’ subsequent acknowledgement of advice moves toward closing the chat session.

Robinson (2001) examines closing sequences in primary-care physician visits. A challenge in health care is to encourage patients to raise additional concerns, which are typically addressed at the end of visits, as topics for discussion. Robinson documents two practices that are used to negotiate the closure of the business of these visits. The first is the future arrangements sequence, where physicians refer to an action that will occur once the current encounter is finished, such as instructions concerning when patients are to visit the physician next. The second he terms the ‘final concern’ pre-closing sequence where final concerns are elicited using questions such as “any other problems?” Robinson shows how physicians often verbally and nonverbally design final concern questions in ways that are biased for a ‘no’ response, such that patients decline to present additional concerns and accede to a shift into closing. Similarly, in her analysis of Korean medical closings, Park (2013) highlights how it is rare for patients to verbalise additional concerns and shows how the organisation of these closings discourages patients from doing so. One way in which the verbalisation of additional concerns is discouraged is via embodied resources as physicians, for example, may shift their gaze away from patients. Simultaneously, patients may treat this shift in gaze as indicating an imminent closure by turning away from the physician, toward the door.

Conversation analytic work has also documented practices for initiating activity shifts. As Depperman, Schmitt and Mondada (2010) note, the transition between phases of activities is a practical problem that co-interactants have to manage routinely. In solving these problems, participants draw on vocal, verbal and multimodal resources and exploit linguistic features, gesture, gaze, body movement and object manipulations (Mondada, 2006). In one of the earliest papers to document the significance of nonverbal behaviour in organising medical interaction, Berg (1996) highlights how the medical record features as a constitutive element of medical practice and shows, for example, how physicians’ embodied actions, such as underlining notes and closing the patient record, communicate to patients that the medical consultation is over. Building on this, Robinson and Stivers (2001) highlight the significance of nonverbal behaviours for the accomplishment of transitions. They show how participants rely heavily resources such as physicians orienting their bodies to medical record charts, writing instruments and examination tables when transitioning from the activity of note taking to that of physical examination. Similarly, Mikkola and Lehtinen (2014) show how participants of performance appraisal interviews may manipulate appraisal forms, for example by touching, turning the page or opening and folding, in order to signal willingness to proceed from one interview item to another. Komter (2006) shows how police records of suspect interviews, which play a key role in the Dutch criminal law process, actively inform and direct the interrogation.

Research has also focussed on verbal resources used to accomplish activity shifts. Waring (2012) examines understanding checks (such as “do you have any questions”) in an English as a second language classroom. These checks are frequently used at an activity boundary where a segment of the lesson is coming to a close and a transition to the next section is relevant. In this environment they are not produced by teachers or treated by learners as inviting questions. Rather, their function is to launch a possible activity-closing sequence prior to transitioning to the next activity. Elsewhere, Yaqubi and Karimpour (2014) argue that understanding checks delivered at activity boundaries are designed to accomplish the dual functions of inviting learners to engage in checking for understanding while also launching a possible activity closing sequence. In contrast, those that are delivered in other environments, such as where the teacher has finished explaining a vocabulary item, or has just provided the instructions for an upcoming activity, have a sole focus on ensuring absolute understanding.

**Preference Organisation and the Design of the ABQ**

A further body of work that is pertinent to our analysis is that which is focused on preference organisation in question design. As Robinson notes, there may be “barriers built into the organisation of communication” (2001, p. 640) that prevent the topicalisation of additional business. For example, yes/no (or polar) questions are almost unavoidably designed for either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as the grammatically preferred response (Schegloff, 2007). By their very nature they present a “candidate version of a state of affairs for confirmation” (Heritage, 2011, p. 340). Interrogatives framed with a negative polarity (Horn, as cited in Heritage, 2011), such as ‘can’t you’ and ‘shouldn’t you’ and so on, anticipate or prefer a ‘no’ response (Heinemann, 2006; Heritage, 2002). However, this is not to say that it is always the case that polar questions actually steer towards a yes/no answer, as recipients may also respond to the *action* that the question is performing. Such questions have the potential to involve ‘cross-cutting preference organisations’ (Schegloff, 2007), where the social action invites a ‘yes’, but the grammatical format invites ‘no’. Further, as Ruusuvuori (2000) shows in her study of giving the reason for the visit in primary health care, the design of doctors’ questions does not necessarily constrain patients’ response action.

Research has demonstrated the significance of preference organisation for the voicing of patients’ unstated concerns in medical settings. Heritage, Robinson, Elliot, Beckett and Wilkes (2007) show how patients’ unmet concerns in primary acute-care visits can be reduced by framing enquiries using the positive polarity “is there something else you want to address in the visit today?” rather than “is there anything else you want to address in the visit today?”. In their study, physicians were assigned to solicit additional concerns using one of these two questions. The use of a ‘some’ intervention reduced patients’ unmet concerns by 78%, without significantly increasing visit length. Meanwhile, the ‘any’ intervention, which is promoted in textbooks of medical interviewing, was relatively ineffective at reducing unmet concerns. The current paper builds on this work and considers the implications of preference organisation for practice in police interviewing, where it is recommended that witnesses should be “asked if there is *anything* more they wish to communicate” and “should always be asked if they have *any* questions” (ABE, 2011, p. 85, emphasis added).

In the first part of the analysis we show how the ABQ is a formulaic step in the pre-closing and closing of interviews. The second section examines practices for soliciting additional information and encouraging interviewees’ contributions during the course of the interview. This has important implications for practice in police interviewing and highlights how children may be granted more room to ask questions or to initiate additional information. This is part of a broader programme of work that has identified how officers adhere to, and depart from, the guidelines laid out in ABE (Antaki, Stokoe, Richardson & Willott, 2015; Childs & Walsh, 2017). The paper also contributes to work that has corrected or falsified elements of what Peräkylä, & Vehviläinen (2003) refer to as ‘stocks of interactional knowledge’- normative models or theories about interaction that can be found in professional texts and training manuals in many professions and which are often a departure from, and a simplification of, what actually happens in real interaction (e.g. Clifton, 2012; Ruusuvuori, 2000). Such an examination will provide a basis for improved best practice guidelines.

**Data and Collection**

The data for this article comes from twenty-seven field videos with children reporting alleged sexual offenses collected from one police constabulary in England. Children’s testimonies are routinely video recorded in England and Wales. Consent for videos to be used for training, audit and other official purposes such as research is standardly requested at the conclusion of any criminal or civil proceedings, or when no proceedings are to be initiated. Local police personnel selected the videos of interviews, which were conducted between March 2010 and December 2012 by twelve trained officers. In some instances an interview supporter, such as a social worker may be present in the room (extracts 1 and 7 are the only extracts presented here where a social worker is present). Frequently the interviews are monitored via video link by a trained officer in a neighbouring room.

Each lasted between twenty five and one hundred and eleven minutes. The recordings were anonymized by the researchers before removal from police premises. Due to the necessity of the removal of all names and identifying information within a limited timeframe, intonation is not marked for names and place names on the transcripts (all of which are pseudonyms). One child interviewee was of pre-school age and the remaining twenty-six were of school age (between ten and sixteen).

All of the data was initially transcribed verbatim. A broad search of the materials was conducted to identify interviewers’ elicitations of additional business. Officers often use probing questions such as ‘did he do: anything e::lse to you’ to solicit further details of information previously provided by the interviewee. These probing questions were excluded from the analysis as discussion of these is beyond the scope of this paper. This search yielded fifty-six candidate examples. Of these, twenty-one are used to initiate pre-closing. These examples were transcribed using the Jefferson notation system (see Hepburn & Bolden, 2017).

The analysis draws on the analytic techniques of contemporary Conversation Analysis to examine episodes of talk in which officers launch the additional business sequence, the location of the additional business question in the ongoing interaction and the design of these turns and actions.

**Analysis**

The first part of the analysis outlines the role of the ABQ as a pre-closing question in the interviews in our dataset. We show how the question is not treated, by officers or by interviewees, as a request for the initiation of a new topic. Rather, the interactional import of the ABQ is to open up the closing of the interview. We then discuss examples where this routine, straightforward closing sequence is expanded as interviewees ask questions. The second part of the analysis outlines practices for soliciting additional information outside of interview closure.

**The Role of the ABQ in Pre-Closing**

Overwhelmingly pre-closing sequences (twenty-one of twenty-seven interview pre-closings in our materials) are initiated with the ABQ. The question allows officers and interviewees to collaborate in establishing a closing relevant environment. When interviewees acknowledge that there is nothing to add or to ask (as occurs in fourteen of our examples), this moves the interaction towards closing.

Extract 2 023-4

(INT= Interviewer, CHI= Child, SW= Social worker).

1 **INT** okay it’s ju- what is it then

2 **CHI** °it’s just no::rmal°=

3 **INT** =[just normal. okay. ]

4 [((brief gaze at notes))]

5 (1.0)

6 **INT** .pt .hhhhh uh::m,

7 [ (4.8) ]

8 **INT** [((brief opening up gesture with hand and notes))]

9 [ri:ght ](0.4) that’s it.

10 [((nods at child))]

11 [ (0.2) ]

12 **CHI** [((nods, smiles))] °hh°

13 **INT** I can’t- (.)

14 [((interviewer gazes at SW)) ]

15 [I can’t thi:nk of anything else I want to cl][ari]fy=

16 **SW** [no ]

17 **INT** =with you is there- is there anything else ↓you want to tell me↓

18 (0.5)

19 **CHI** er::m, [(0.5) no]:: ((smiles))

20 **INT**[((closes notebook)) ]

21 no:?

22 **CHI** [((continues smiling))]

23 [ (0.4) ]

24 **INT** [((gazes at and flicks through notebook))]

25 **INT** [oka::y that’s grea::t (.) ].h er::m, (0.6) >I’m not

26 gon-< I’m not gonna ask you any further questio::ns (0.2)

27 al[ri:ght? we’ve finished.]

28 **CHI** [((nods)) ]

29 **INT** so the ti::me .hhh i::s fourteen twenty si:x

Prior to the start of the extract, the interviewer left the room for a discussion with the officer monitoring the interview via video link to check whether any information had been missed or if any points required clarification. Upon re-entering the room he initiated a question regarding the state of the alleged perpetrator’s penis. This question was preceded by a question projection component; ‘the only last question I want to ask you is, (.) and it is (0.2) an impo::rtant question.’ (data not shown). A preliminary observation is that this nudges the interviewee to the relevance of closing.

At line 3 the officer closes the question-answer sequence regarding the state of the alleged perpetrator’s penis while gazing at his notes. At lines 5-7 there is a partially filled silence. In the latter part of this silence the officer makes a brief ‘opening up’ gesture with his hands and notes, in such a way that suggests that the notes, and by implication, the interview, are complete. He then affirmatively nods at the child, while delivering the boundary marker ‘ri:ght’. In the second part of the turn he announces ‘that’s it.’, marking the interview as complete. The child smiles and nods in return, collaborating in the creation of a closing relevant environment (c.f. Robinson, 2001). The officer begins a turn at line 13 with ‘I can’t-’ and restarts this at line 15, employing his gaze as an addressing device (Lerner, 1993), gazing at the social worker while announcing ‘I can’t thi:nk of anything else I want to clarify’. The social worker treats this as a request for confirmation and provides that confirmation. The interviewer’s subsequent ‘with you’ re-includes the child as an addressee. In the second TCU the officer delivers the ABQ ‘is there anything else ↓you want to tell me↓’. The drop in pitch in the final part of the turn characterises the question as a sequence closing sequence (Schegloff, 2007). At this point in the interaction the interviewer, interviewee and social worker have collaborated in paving a road to closure. Clearly, rather than functioning as a request for new information, the question is a formulaic, routine question in the pre-closing sequence.

The child responds with the hedging particle ‘er::m,’. Immediately following this and before the interviewee has provided a type-conforming response, the officer closes his notebook, indicating that the official record is complete and strongly projecting a shift into closing (Park, 2013). As the interviewer closes his notebook the child responds with the preferred ‘no’ response and begins smiling. The interviewer subsequently seeks reconfirmation of this declination (line 21), a request that is part of a confirmed, preferred and collaboratively constructed closing. We can note that the interviewee *does not* produce the sequentially relevant ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. Rather, she continues smiling. The interviewer treats this as a reconfirmation with ‘oka::y that’s grea::t’. This high grade assessment marks the interview as successfully complete (Antaki, Houtkoop-Steenstra & Rapley, 2000) and in the second TCU the first terminal utterance ‘we’ve finished’ brings the interview to a close. A similar pattern is observable in the second example. Four minutes and twenty seconds prior to the start of the extract the interviewer re-entered the room after a discussion with a colleague who was monitoring the interview via video link.

Extract 3 029-3

01 **INT** ↓so why not↓

02 (1.4)

03 **CHI** I don’t kno:w

04 **INT** [((begins making notes

05 [ (3.6)

06 **CHI** then when I got, (0.7) that

07 [out my bag, (.) they were li:ke(.)↓oh my god you actually di:d↓

08 [((child begins playing with hair, continues to do so for

09 remainder of extract))

10 [ (0.7)

11 **INT** [((continues making notes))

12 **CHI** heu:h

13 [ (6.6)

14 **INT** [((interviewer continues making notes))

15 [((interviewer gazes at notes)) ]

16 [°mka:y, (0.3) ↓I’ve got no further questions for you↓°]

17 [(0.5) is there anything you want to (.) say to me:?

18 [((interviewer gazes at child))

19 **CHI** [°°no°° ]

20 [((shakes head, plays with hair))]

21 **INT** [°no?° ]

22 [((interviewer continues gazing at child))]

23 [ (0.9) ]

24 **CHI** [((child continues playing with hair))]

25 **INT** [((interviewer leans forward, puts notes on table))

26 [alright so we’ll bring the interview to a clo::se, so I just need

27 to say what ↑ti::me it is,↑ (0.4) erm, (1.3) time by my watch

28 i::s, (0.6) two:: twenty ni:ne (1.2) pee em.

Prior to the start of the extract the interviewer asked the child why her friends did not initially believe her when hearing about the reported events. In the turn at line 1 he pursues an account for this. Following the interviewee’s ‘I don’t know’ response the interviewer begins making notes and continues to do so until line 13. He does not engage with the interviewee’s turn at lines 6-7, where she builds on her story and corroborates this with the reported speech of friends that do believe her, rather than providing the requested account. At lines 17-18 he initiates a possible pre-closing move with the boundary marker ‘°mka:y,°’ (Beach, 1993) and the announcement ‘↓I’ve got no further questions for you↓°’, which clearly communicates that business of the interview is complete. The lowered pitch and volume contribute to the hearing of this as a move into closing (Schegloff, 1996). The officer also concurrently gazes at his notes, signalling disengagement with the interviewee.

In the second part of the turn the officer delivers the ABQ ‘is there anything you want to (.) say to me’. The child’s ‘no’ response is immediate, brief and type conforming and is delivered audibly quieter than the surrounding talk. She continues playing with her hair as she delivers the turn. Similarly to extract 2, in line 22 the interviewer requests a reconfirmation of this declination. Also similarly to extract 2, the child does not produce a relevant response with either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ and instead continues playing with her hair. Following a 0.9 second lag, during which the interviewer gazes at the child, he proceeds as if a reconfirmation had been forthcoming as he leans forward and places his notes on the table, while stating ‘we’ll bring the interview to a clo::se’.

In sum, in the examples above interviews are brought to a close in ways that are recognisable as doing closing, while checking for the presence of unmentioned mentionables through the use of the ABQ. Interviewers deliver a closing indication, explicitly marking the interview as complete, prior to delivering the ABQ. The ABQ is heard as initiating a closing sequence, which is evidenced by interviewees’ preferred ‘no’ responses. Clearly then, the function of the ABQ is as a routine, formulaic step in the pre-closing of the interview, which is at odds with the institutional goal of ensuring that interviewees leave the interview having communicated everything that they wish and with no unanswered questions. It is also of note that there are two interrelated tasks to be conducted during the closure phase, the first being to ask the interviewee “if there is anything more they wish to communicate” (ABE, 2011, p. 85), the second that “the witness should always be asked if they have any questions” (ibid). Across the data set the ABQ is typically initiated *once* within pre-closing sequences and as such only one of the recommended tasks are completed.

**Sequence expansion: Interviewees’ questions.**

The analysis now turns to examples where the closing sequence described above is expanded as the interviewee opts to proffer additional business by asking a question. These examples are different in this respect and represent an alternative pattern of closing. Rather than initiating a new topic these questions are directed at procedures after the interview or go beyond the topic of the interview itself and as such display interviewees’ orientations to the relevance of closing. Immediately prior to the start of extract 4, the interviewer asked the child whether her friend Katie had also been assaulted by the alleged perpetrator. The child indicated that she had not and we join the participants as the interviewer is acknowledging this information.

Extract 4 011

01 **INT** okay.

02 **CHI** cause Katie’s g(h)ot more se(h)nse .hh! HE:[:H!]

03 **INT** [ ye]a::h

04 [( ) ]

05 **CHI** [£I’m not I]’m dumb in the head ↑I am£.↑ .hh

06 **INT** ↑you’re not. (.) you’ve done we:ll (.) you’ve done we:ll today↑

07 **CHI** °hm°=

08 **INT** =↓you should be prou:d of yourself (.) you done really well.↓ .hh

09alri::ght, (.) li:sten, (0.5) [I:: haven’t got any more questions=

10 **CHI** [((leans forward, rests head on

11 chin))

12 **INT** =to ask yer, (0.4) ↑is there anythi::ng else (.) you want to sa:y↑

13 [ (3.8)

14 **INT** [((begins flicking through notebook

15 **CHI** there’s one thi:ng, how lo:ng could bi(h)n lo(h)cked up fo::r

16 **INT** [((continues flicking through notebook))

17 [↓I don’t about that.↓]

18 [((closes notebook)) ]

19 **CHI** a:w man! hh

20 **INT** HOW LONG IS HE GOING TO BE (.) do you mea:n

21 **CHI** yeah.

22 **INT** I don’t know. (.) >I don’t know< that’s something that would be

23decided if it went to cou::rt,

24 (0.3)

25 **INT** I’ll spea:k to you about that in a bit.

26 **CHI** ↑hm↑

27 **INT** ↓alri:ght.↓ oka:y ↑then ti::me then by my wa::tch↑ is eighteen

28 thi::rty, and that’s ↑the end of the intervi:ew!↑

Prior to the start of extract 5 there was an extended gap of silence during which the interviewer was engaged in making notes. Upon completion of this notetaking he announced ‘I thi:nk that’s more or less i:t really I think I’ve covered everything I wanted to- (0.6) ↓to go throu:gh.’, nudging the interviewee to the relevance of closing the encounter (data not shown).

Extract 5 005-2 10:15

01 **INT** °okay° .HH RI::GHT, so before we finish off the:n, abou::t: (0.5)

02 wha::t’s ↓happened he::re↓ is there anything else you want to ask

03 me before we- we finish off ((gazes at and organises notes for the

04 duration of turn))

05 [((interviewer gazes at child))

06 **CHI** [I want to as:k, (.) you ~kno::w~ the:: gi:rl,

07 **INT** mm::

08 **CHI** the olde::r girl (0.4) [ HA]S she said anything about i:t

09 **INT** [huh] I’ll- I’ll talk to you afte:r, (.)

10 about that, I- I #won’t# put that on tape °un: for the

11 t[ime be]ing.°

12 **CHI** [yea::h]

13 **INT** ((gathers notes together for duration of turn))

14 oka:y so: .h if- if ↑I just make sure everything’s↑ working okay

15 with the tape machi:::nes, (.) [I’l]l come ba::ck, and then we’ll=

16 **CHI** [hm ]

17 =finish off::. (.)°okay.°

18 (0.8)

19 **INT** [((picks up notes)) ] [((stands up)) ]

20 [ri::ght, (.) so, (.)]↑[°what time are we on hhh°↑]

21 (.)↑↑you just stay he:re↑↑ and I’[ll- I’ll] be back in a seco::nd

22 **CHI** [°oka::y°]

32 **INT** ((leaves room))

We can begin noting several common features, as identified in extracts 2 and 3. In both examples, prior to initiating the additional business sequence, the officers open the closing section by explicitly formulating the main body of the interview as complete. In extract 4 the officer praises the child ‘you’ve done we:ll (.) you’ve done we:ll today↑’, and then announces that ‘I:: haven’t got any more questions to ask yer’. In extract 5 the officer prefaces the ABQ with ‘before we finish off the:n’, reiterating this in the final part of the turn with ‘before we- we finish off’. In both examples the officers are physically engaged with their notes- in extract 4 the officer begins flicking through his notes immediately following the delivery of the ABQ, and continues to do so during the interviewee’s subsequent turn. In extract 5 the officer gazes at and organises his notes concurrently with the delivery of the ABQ and lifts his gaze up at the interviewee as she asks whether another girl involved has reported anything.

In both examples the interviewee opts to ask a question and the first element of each turn is composed of a question projection (‘there’s one thi:ng,’; ‘I want to as:k,’), orienting to the asking of the question as an accountable matter. In extract 4 the child asks ‘how lo:ng could bi(h)n lo(h)cked up fo::r’, while in extract 5 the child asks ‘the olde::r girl (0.4) HAS she said anything about i:t’. It is notable that neither question adds new information or proffers a new topic. The first example is directed at procedures following the interview, while the second goes beyond the topic of the interview itself. As such, both display orientation to closing as the questions can, and perhaps should, be discussed outside of the interview itself.

Both are questions that officers may have some difficulty answering. Guidelines state that “promises that cannot be kept should not be made about future developments” (ABE, 2011, p. 85). As such, in extract 4 the officer is unable to indicate how long the alleged perpetrator may be ‘lo(h)cked up fo::r’. It is also important that police investigations are conducted with regard to the confidentiality of victims, witnesses and suspects and as such in extract 5, the officer does not indicate whether another girl involved has ‘said anything about i:t’.

In both examples there is an absence of an answer and in both instances the officers renegotiate the closure of the business of the interview by invoking future arrangements (Robinson, 2011) and indicating that the topic will be discussed further upon completion of the interview. As arrangement making is understood to be a ‘closing relevant action’ (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973) these references to events that will occur following the interview strongly project a shift into closing. In both examples the child accepts these future arrangements. In extract 4 this is done with a disagreement implicative weak agreement (Pomerantz, 1984) token ‘↑hm↑’ while in extract 5 the child breaks into the interviewers turn with ‘yea::h’. In both extracts the interviewers subsequently move into closing with sequence closing thirds (Schegloff, 2007) (‘↓alri:ght.↓’ ‘oka:y’) followed by the terminal utterances. In neither example does the interviewer reissue the ABQ, which would provide a further opportunity for the interviewee to proffer additional business. This further evidences the action import of the ABQ as initiating pre-closing.

**Inviting Additional Business**

The practices in the previous section highlight that the function of the ABQ during interview closure is as a formulaic step in the pre-closing of the interview encounter. This raises the question of how, and in which sequential environments, officers can encourage interviewees to ask questions or to add further information. It is this to which the analysis now turns. There are thirty-five examples of questions that are used to invite additional business in our materials. Outside of interview closing, invitations to proffer additional information are frequently delivered at activity boundaries as participants move through interactional units at the end of a topic or at the start of a new one. These invitations are delivered using various formats such as;

‘↑anything else you can think of ↑↑while I do that¿↑↑’

‘is there’s anything else we’ve not ↓ta::lked about that you think (.) might be °important at the moment°’

The following extract occurs eighteen minutes and forty-five seconds into a twenty-four minute and fifty-four second long interview. In this interview the officer does not leave the room to check with a colleague whether any information has been missed. The extract directly follows the questioning phase, during which the child was encouraged to expand upon and clarify his free narrative report. Following this questioning, the officer asks the child whether there is anything to add.

Extract 6 010

01 **INT** ok↑a:y↑ erm:, can y(h)ou think of anything I::’ve not spoke to you

02 about that you (.) p’rhaps expected me to ask you

03 [ (1.6) ]

04 **CHI** [((moves legs))]

05 **CHI** [ e::rm, ]

06 [((brief gaze up))]

07 [ (3.4)

08 **CHI** [((directs gaze down))

09 ↑e:rm↑ .pt d’no [rea:lly, but e:rm, (0.4) I kno:w- I hope this is

10 [((gazes at interviewer))

11 not like (.) [↓being nosey or anythi:ng,↓ (0.4) #buah-# do you

12 [((raises hand, puts on side of head))

13 know about anything about whats gonna happen to granddad or

14 anything

15 **INT** pt. well, (0.2) I-I don’t personally know cus that’s not my

16 decision its [s[omebody el]]se’s decisio:n, .hh e:::rm, (0.2) =

17 **CHI**  [ [hmm ]]

18 [((nods)) ]

19 **INT** = but what we will do is take on board what you’re saying, (0.4)

20 and what you’re saying i:s (0.6) you asked grandda:d, (0.8) you::

21 didn’t thi::nk, (.) it was wro:ng (0.2) at the ti::me (0.5) you’ve

22 p’rhaps learned that it isn’t p’rhaps the right thing that

23 grandda:d (0.7) should have done it, e::rm (0.6) .PT a:nd that

24 you don’t want him to go to prison,

25 (0.5)

26 **CHI** yeah

27 [((nods)) ]

28 **INT** e:::rm (1.0) but you would understa::nd [and accept if:] (1.0) he

29 was uh- punished in some way b[ut no]t- but not by going to

30 prison.

31 **CHI** [yeah ]

32 [((nods))]

33 **INT** so we ↑take on board↑ what- what- what (0.3) you would (0.4) want.

34 [ (0.3)]

35 **CHI** [((nods))]

36 **INT** erm (0.7) you’ve not seen gra:nddad since Christmas da:y ↑how do

37 you feel about tha:t

In line 1 the interviewer delivers the first ABQ of the interview. The question is built as a request for further information that is contingent on the child’s ability to ‘think of anything’. The question is not built as ‘is there anything you want to talk about that I’ve not spoke to you about’, which takes the form of an offer to satisfy the interviewee’s want or need to discuss matters further. Thus, compliance with this request is the preferred response. The second TCU, which is formatted as a matter of the child’s prior expectations, cedes epistemic authority to the child. While institutional agents are supposed to be experts concerning children’s institutionally related problems (Butler, Potter, Danby, Emmison & Hepburn, 2010), children are expected to know their own thoughts and feelings.

There follows a 1.6 second gap of silence as the interviewee is given time to respond. This is followed by a hesitation ‘e::rm,’ as the interviewee withdraws his eye gaze from the interviewer, making it public that he is ‘doing thinking’ (Houtkoop-Steenstra, as cited in Brouwer, 2003). Several features of the turn at lines 9-14 orient the question as potentially accountable. The ‘d’no rea:lly,’ functions as a prepositioned hedge, indicating that he is not fully committed to what follows in the turn at talk (Weatherall, 2011) while ‘I hope this is not like (.) ↓being nosey or anythi:ng,↓’ orients to the question as one that he is not entitled to ask. Nevertheless, the additional business question’s format, which clearly invites the interview to elaborate or to add information, provide agency and space for him to pose the question.

The question, which concerns the investigation’s potential outcome, is one that the interviewer is unable to answer. The interviewer takes an extended turn (lines 19-24, 28-30, 33), in which she provides an account for being unable to answer (she does not ‘personally know cus that’s not my decision its somebody else’s decisio:n’), reassures the child that ‘what we will do is take on board what you’re saying,’ and provides summary formulation of the child’s earlier statements. Although the interviewer is unable to state what may ‘happen to granddad’ she puts a positive gloss on what will happen after the interview, emphasising that ‘we ↑take on board↑ what- what- what (0.3) you would (0.4) want.’ The interviewer subsequently launches a further question-answer sequence and asks the child how he feels about not having ‘seen gra:nddad since Christmas da:y’. Throughout the rest of the interview there is discussion of whether the child would like to see his Grandfather, further discussion of procedures surrounding the interview and the child’s plans for his birthday that evening. Clearly then, the ABQ in this fragment is a practice to invite more talk.

In the following example the ABQ is delivered as part of a series of pursuits for further detail. The extract is part of an extended sequence of talk during which the child was asked to describe everything that happened ‘so I can imagine it’ (data not shown). Immediately prior to the start of the extract the child described how the alleged perpetrator offered her money in return for sex. The target turn occurs at lines 19-20.

Extract 7 008-2

01 **INT** yea:h? (.) and what did you say to him

02 **CHI** ↓<I said I don’t want your money and (love)>↓

03 **INT** oka:y

04 (2.2)

05 **INT** did he do: anything e::lse to you

06 (2.0)

07 **CHI** no::.

08 **INT** ↓are you su::re?↓

09 **CHI** yea:h=

10 **INT** bit hesitant the:re.

11 (0.8)

12 **CHI** °°yeah°°=

13 **INT** =CAUSE THIS is whe::re (.) we want you to tell us (.) everythi:ng

14 >like I said if you< (.) just want you to tell us everythi::ng

15 and then (0.6) it’s a::ll (0.4) it’s all been said then hasn’t it 16 ((leans toward child and gestures with hands for duration of

17 turn))

18 (0.4)

19 **INT** yea::h¿ (.) is there anything e::lse tu- (0.4) yuh- you want to

20 tell us abou:t

21 **CHI** no::.

22 **INT** no:. (.) is there anything else ha::ppened that you don’t want to

23 tell us abou:t?

24 **CHI** n::o::. s’a:ll I can remembe:r (.)°°at the moment.°°

25 **INT** oka:y,

At line 3 the officer closes the question-answer sequence regarding the money that was offered by the perpetrator. After a slight gap (line 4) she poses a probing question ‘did he do: anything e::lse to you’ to solicit further detail about the incident described in the preceding sequence. The question is grammatically formatted (‘anything’) to prefer a ‘no’ type answer. This question involves ‘cross-cutting preference organisations’ (Schegloff, 2007), where the social action invites a ‘yes’, but the grammatical format invites ‘no’. After a slight gap the child indicates ‘no::.’. At line 8 the officer pursues this and following the child’s indication that she is sure that there is nothing additional to report (line 9), provides an account for this pursuit, creating a further opportunity for the child to provide further detail. In the turn at lines 13-15 the officer delivers a clear instruction, using a directive format ‘we want you to tell us (.) everythi:ng’. In the second TCU she abandons ‘>like I said if you<’, presumably headed for ‘if you just tell us everything’ in favour of ‘just want you to tell us everythi::ng’. While the directive format *tells* rather than *asks* the child to ‘tell us everythi::ng’, (Craven & Potter, 2010) this is carefully managed. The account for the directive ‘it’s all been said then’, with the tag ‘hasn’t it’ strongly projects a ‘yes’ and renders this with a positive gloss, presenting this as a desirable outcome. The officer orients her body to the child and gestures as she delivers this turn, signalling engagement. Following a slight gap she pursues confirmation that this would be a desirable outcome ‘yea::h¿’ before delivering the ABQ. While the probing question at line 4 solicits further details of information provided in the preceding sequence, the ABQ launches a new sequence which opens up the talk to ‘anything e::lse’ that the child may wish to add. The pursuit of additional business is carefully managed as the question is formatted as a matter of the child’s want to discuss matters further, which allows for optionality. Following the child’s declination (line 21) the officer produces another pursuit ‘is there anything else ha::ppened that you don’t want to tell us abou:t?’. The child delivers another declination and an account for this declination ‘s’a:ll I can remembe:r (.)°°at the moment.°°’. In this example then, the ABQ is delivered as part of a series of pursuits for further detail and there is a clear focus on inviting additional information.

While the ABQs delivered during interview closure launch a possible activity-closing sequence prior to transitioning to the close of the interview, the delivery of questions that solicit additional information during the course of the interview allows for more relaxed activity boundaries, with interviewee contributions being encouraged and solicited. In these examples there is a clear focus on providing interactional space for the interviewee to say or to ask more.

**Discussion**

This paper has examined a sample of UK police officers’ interviews with children reporting alleged sexual offenses and has compared the ways in which they bring interviews to a close, as well as the ways in which they invite interviewees to ask questions or to add to what has been said, with the advice outlined in best practice guidelines. This work contributes to an understanding of the closure of police interviews generally by showing how closure is accomplished. Successful investigative interviews involve gaining a full account of the reported events as possible, and leaving witnesses feeling as if they have been given the fullest opportunity to be heard (Odeljan, Butorac and Bailey, 2015). Guidelines emphasise the importance of the closure phase for achieving this and suggest that when closing the interview, officers should invite the initiation of a new topic. In examining how this is done in practice, the analysis makes visible that this suggestion is paradoxical. In this location interviewers begin to negotiate the closure of the interview and transition into the activity of closing. This article has illuminated the role of the ABQ as a pre-closing question. At a literal level, the question provides interviewees with the opportunity to add further information or to voice any unresolved questions. However the analysis has shown how, rather than initiating a new topic, the ABQ used to initiate a pre-closing sequence. This is in line with the evidence from work in Conversation Analysis, which has shown how these kinds of questions are routinely used to propose pre-closing (Robinson, 2001; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Stommel & TeMolder, 2015).

In our materials, officers orient to the relevance of closing in several ways. The first is that the additional business question is explicitly formulated as the last topic of the encounter. The second is via the organisation of gaze and body direction that signals engagement with written notes and a disengagement from the interviewee. Further, the grammatical design of the questions, using the negative polarity item ‘any’ prefers a no-type response, or a declination to discuss additional business. As Robinson (2001) notes, if practitioners want to encourage the initiation of a new topic at the closure of the business of encounters, they should pause competing activities, such as writing notes, and physically engage with interviewees via gaze and body orientation. They should grammatically design questions to avoid biasing responses- such as ‘do you have things to add?’ or ‘do you have questions?’. Officers should be aware of the written record as a resource for organising the interaction (Komter, 2006) and should also avoid explicitly formulating the ABQ as the last topic of the encounter. Interviewees display orientations to closing via frequent preferred ‘no’ responses, or declinations to proffer additional business. This declination provides a means by which the interview can move towards closing. However this is not to say that the interviews necessarily close without interviewees opting to proffer additional business. In our materials questions asked by interviewees in this environment orient to the relevance of closing and are directed at procedures after the interview or go beyond the interview itself. Officers in our sample responded to these questions by indicating that the topic will be discussed further following the interview, thus invoking proposing to end the encounter and making a return to the suspended closedown.

More generally, this work contributes to a growing body of research that examines how a wide range of multimodal resources are employed in an orderly way for accomplishing closure and activity shifts (Depperman, Schmitt & Mondada, 2010; Komter, 2006; Mikkola & Lehtinen, 2014; Mondada, 2006; Robinson & Stiver, 2001) by revealing the role of gaze, body orientation and engagement with physical objects- written notes- in accomplishing interview closure. However a limitation of this study is that permissions were not given to include stills from the video recordings in order to make the embodied actions of participants visually available to the reader.

A second aim of the paper was to begin to examine practices by which interviewees can be granted more room to ask questions or to initiate additional information. By offering the interviewee the opportunity to add to what has been said *throughout the course of the interview*, officers provide space for the interviewee to add information that they may otherwise not have raised for discussion. These findings have implications for officers by highlighting how further contributions can be encouraged. This may reduce instances of interviewees leaving the interview encounter not having said everything that they wish or with unanswered questions, which provides children with the fullest opportunity to be heard (Odeljan, Butorac and Bailey, 2015) and ultimately stands to improve criminal justice responses to sexual offenses. Space limitations prevent us from doing more than outlining some of the practices used to encourage interviewee contributions. A more thorough examination of these practices is a matter for future research.

A further important practical implication of our findings is that best practice guidelines such as Achieving Best evidence could be improved with grounding in a better understanding of actual interaction between officers and interviewees. Although our sample of interviews were cases with children reporting their being victim of alleged sexual offenses, it may well be that the role of the ABQ in the pre-closing of the interview is a general pattern in police interviews with witnesses, victims and suspects as there is similar guidance on interview closure across these groups (e.g. College of Policing, 2013). Indeed, our findings accord with the robust literature on closing interactions (Park, 2013; Robinson, 2001; Schegloff & Sacks, 1973; Stommel & TeMolder, 2015). Our paper also contributes to work that has shown how ‘stocks of interactional knowledge’ (Peräkylä, & Vehviläinen, 2003) may fail to correspond with the empirical reality of professional-client interaction (e.g. Clifton, 2012; Ruusuvuori, 2000).

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